



# Catawba County

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Public Health

Environmental Health Division

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## **Tis the Season... for the Mosquito**

It is that time of year. The warm sunny days and balmy nights bring us out of our homes and into the great outdoors. The smells of fresh cut grass and barbeque grills linger in the air. But also lingering nearby is our old friend the mosquito. Catawba County Environmental Health officials want take this opportunity to inform and prepare our citizens for mosquito season so everyone can enjoy a safe and healthy summer.

Local Public Health no longer collects dead birds for analysis since the West Nile Virus has been found in all 100 counties in North Carolina. The emphasis is now on making the public aware of how to protect itself from being bitten, and how to stop mosquitoes from breeding in their backyard.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), West Nile virus and other mosquito borne illnesses are spread by the bite of an infected mosquito, and can infect people, horses, birds, and some other animals. Most people who become infected with West Nile virus have either no symptoms or only mild ones.

Elimination of insect breeding areas and protecting against mosquito bites is the first line of defense against mosquitoes that may carry mosquito-borne diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says citizens can reduce the chances of becoming ill by protecting themselves from mosquito bites. To avoid mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellent containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you're outdoors. Always read the product label before applying and/or contact a Physician for guidance. Do not use personal insect repellents on babies under 6 months of age.
- Wear long-sleeved clothes and long pants treated with repellent
- Remain indoors during peak mosquito feeding hours (dusk until dawn) to further reduce your risk.
- Ensure that your window and door screens are secure and repaired to avoid mosquito entrance.
- If you or your children have been bitten by a mosquito and begin to show symptoms of one of the mosquito related illnesses such as a high fever, headache and/or neck stiffness, see your physician for an accurate diagnosis.

The actions you take to eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitoes are of prime importance in protecting you and your family from mosquito borne disease. Mosquitoes can breed in a very small amount of standing water. To reduce the mosquito activity in your yard, try to make the environment as unfriendly to mosquitoes as possible by removing discarded tires, empty cans, toys, flowerpots, and other containers that may collect water. Mosquito larvicides are readily available in most hardware stores, are environmentally safe, and can be applied to ponds or most other areas of standing water safely.

For additional information on West Nile Virus you may visit the Catawba County Environmental Health website at [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/westnile.asp](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/westnile.asp), or call (828) 465-8270.

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